**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method for describing a problem in a network, comprising:

selecting a subset of alarms associated with a service, said service having a unique identifier and being carried by a path in the network, said network including a number of network entities, the subset of alarms being selected from a list of alarms in the network;

grouping the selected subset of alarms in a number of groups, each group being associated with said network entity;

arranging the groups of alarms in the direction of the path of the service in the network; and

transforming each alarm in each group of the selected subset of alarms into a problem description for the service.

2. A method as described in claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a corrective procedure for one of the some and all alarms from the groups of the selected subset of alarms.

3. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the network entities carrying the service comprise one or more of the following physical location types: a node, a bay, a quadrant, a slot, a card and a port.

4. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the step of grouping the selected subset of alarms comprises grouping the selected subset of alarms by one of the network entities carrying the service.

5. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the step of grouping the selected subset of alarms comprises grouping the selected subset of alarms by one or more of the network entities carrying the service.

6. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the step of transforming each alarm further comprises the step of forming one or more templates, a template including text substitution markers.

7. A method as described in claim 6, wherein the text substitution markers correspond to network entities.

8. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the step of arranging the groups of alarms comprises arranging the groups of alarms in the direction of the path from the beginning of the path to the end of the path.

9. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the step of arranging the groups of alarms comprises arranging the groups of alarms in the direction of the path from the end of the path to the beginning of the path.

10. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the type of problem comprises one or more of the following types of problems:

a missing channel identification alarm;

an unexpected channel identification alarm;

a loss of signal alarm; and

a channel power out of range alarm.

11. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the description is a verbal description.

12. A method as described in claim 11, wherein the description is an English description.

13. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the description is a pictorial description.